

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus operating system including at least two apparatuses which provide output of the same type, and a control server capable of communicating with each apparatus,
5 wherein each apparatus includes a communication section for transmitting to the control server a notification signal indicative of a pending change or a change in an output state of the apparatus, and
- 10 wherein the control server includes:
 - a control rule storage section having stored therein a control rule which associates an output state of one apparatus with an output state to be taken by another apparatus when said one apparatus is in said output state;
 - 15 a location-related information acquiring section for acquiring location-related information which is set in association with a location of each apparatus;
 - a determination section for receiving the notification signal from any one of said at least two apparatuses,
20 and in response to the notification signal, determining the output state to be taken by an operation target apparatus which is other than an apparatus having transmitted the notification signal, based on the control rule and the location-related information; and
 - 25 an operating section for operating the operation target apparatus so as to transition into the output state

determined by the determination section.

2. The apparatus operating system according to claim 1,
wherein each apparatus outputs sound, and the output state
5 corresponds to a level of sound outputted from the apparatus.

3. The apparatus operating system according to claim 1,
wherein each apparatus is an air-conditioning and/or heating
apparatus, and the output state corresponds to a temperature set
10 by the apparatus.

4. The apparatus operating system according to claim 1,
wherein the communication section transmits the
notification signal when there is a pending increase or an increase
15 of output of the apparatus,

wherein the control rule associates the increase of the
output of the apparatus with a reduction of output of another
apparatus, and

wherein the determination section determines the output
20 state of the operation target apparatus so as to reduce output
of the operation target apparatus.

5. The apparatus operating system according to claim 1,
wherein the determination section derives from the
25 location-related information a distance between the apparatus

having transmitted the notification signal and the operation target apparatus, and if the derived distance is equal to or more than a predetermined distance, the determination section determines not to change the output state of the operation target apparatus.

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6. The apparatus operating system according to claim 1, wherein the communication section transmits the notification signal when the user has performed an operation of changing the output state of the apparatus.

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7. The apparatus operating system according to claim 6, wherein the communication section transmits the notification signal in the case where the output state of the apparatus temporarily changes for a predetermined time period,

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wherein the apparatus operating system further includes a state storage section for storing a pre-operation output state of the operation target apparatus, and

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wherein the operating section operates the operation target apparatus such that the operation target apparatus transitions into the output state determined by the determination section, and after a lapse of the predetermined time period, the operating section operates the operation target apparatus such that the operation target apparatus transitions into the output state stored in the state storage section.

8. The apparatus operating system according to claim 1,
wherein the control rule associates an output state to
be taken by the apparatus with a condition for operating the
apparatus so as to transition into said output state,

5 wherein the control server further includes a
determination section which uses the location-related information
to determine whether the condition is satisfied, and

wherein the operation executing section operates the
operation target apparatus only when the determination section
10 determines that the condition is satisfied.

9. A control server capable of communicating with at
least two apparatuses which provide output of the same type, the
server comprising:

15 a control rule storage section having stored therein
a control rule which associates an output state of one apparatus
with an output state to be taken by another apparatus when said
one apparatus is in said output state;

20 a location-related information acquiring section for
acquiring location-related information which is set in association
with a location of each apparatus;

25 a determination section for receiving from any one of
said at least two apparatuses a notification signal indicative
of a pending change or a change in an output state of that one
apparatus, and in response to the notification signal, determining

the output state to be taken by an operation target apparatus which is other than an apparatus having transmitted the notification signal, based on the control rule and the location-related information; and

5 an operating section for operating the operation target apparatus so as to transition into the output state determined by the determination section.

10. 10. An apparatus operating method for use in an apparatus operating system including at least two apparatuses which provide output of the same type, and a control server capable of communicating with each apparatus,

15 wherein the control server has stored therein a control rule which associates an output state of one apparatus with an output state to be taken by another apparatus when said one apparatus is in said output state, and

 wherein the method comprises the steps of:

 transmitting to the control server a notification signal indicative of a pending change or a change in the output state of said one apparatus;

 acquiring location-related information which is set in association with a location of each apparatus;

 upon receipt of the notification signal from any one of said at least two apparatuses, determining the output state to be taken by an operation target apparatus which is other than

an apparatus having transmitted the notification signal, based on the control rule and the location-related information; and
operating the operation target apparatus so as to transition into the output state determined by the determination section.

11. A program which can be read by a computer in a control server capable of communicating with at least two apparatuses which provide output of the same type,

10 wherein the control server has stored therein a control rule which associates an output state of one apparatus with an output state to be taken by another apparatus when said one apparatus is in said output state, and

wherein the program causes the control server to

15 implement:

a location-related information acquisition step for acquiring location-related information which is set in association with a location of each apparatus;

20 a determination step for receiving from any one of said at least two apparatuses a notification signal indicative of a pending change or a change in an output state of that one apparatus, and in response to the notification signal, determining the output state to be taken by an operation target apparatus which is other than an apparatus having transmitted the notification signal, based on the control rule and the location-related

information; and

an operation step for operating the operation target apparatus so as to transition into the output state determined by the determination section.